

A Newsletter from the Employee Advisory Service

FrontLine Employee

Wellness, Productivity, & You!

Call EAS: Olympia (360) 753-3260 Seattle (206) 720-3514 Spokane (509) 482-3686

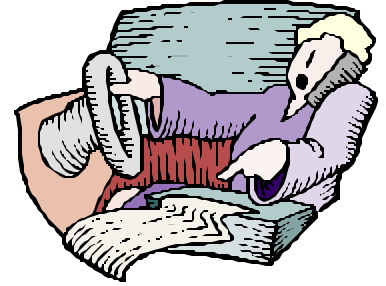
Website: <http://hr.dop.wa.gov/eas.html>

Loaning Money to a Coworker?



It's a personal decision whether to loan money to co-workers. Money problems can be a nightmare, so it's natural to want to help a friend get through a pinch, but loaning money can also hurt a friendship or add to a financial crisis if it is really a symptom of a larger problem. EAS can refer employees with financial problems to many types of resources, so it makes sense to encourage a coworker to make the call. Such advice is often worth more than the loan.

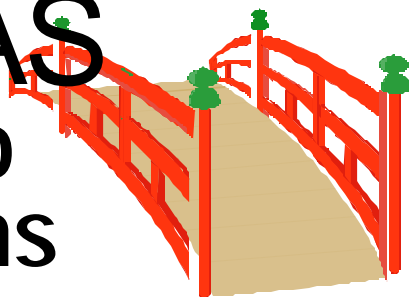
Mobile Phone Rage?



New AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety (AAAFTS) research shows that cell phone use in a car increases the risk of a crash. Other evidence exists that an emotionally intense cell phone conversation is riskier than a simple conversation. The AAAFTS research showed dialing a radio/CD/tape player or eating in your car puts you at even higher risk for a crash than using a cell phone!

Source: AAA Foundation

The EAS Bridge to Solutions



You are anxious to get started with professional counseling, but the therapist you chose has no appointments available for three weeks. You don't want to see anyone else because this is the one that feels "right." Maybe EAS can provide short-term support by helping you begin problem-solving and assisting you in clarifying goals for treatment. As a result, you may get more from the counseling relationship once you start.

Shift Focus to Your Wonderful Goal



Temporarily shifting your focus from your source of stress to something non-stressful is a key stress management technique. Using a powerful and exciting life goal is ideal. *Try this:* Identify any portion of any exciting "will-do!" pursuit or life goal you haven't acted on yet. Will you run Bloomsday next year? Get a book on it, or begin walking now. Will you own your own bed and breakfast in the San Juan Islands someday? There's a lot to know. Contact the Washington bed and breakfast association to begin research on how to make it happen. Stressed? Take a break and spend time on your magnificent and exciting life goal.

New from the



Welcome to this first issue, of the *Frontline Employee*, designed to answer questions employees ask, and to encourage active thought and discussion about issues we all face daily. This newsletter may start discussion that leads to further questions. You have many resources available to you—your own supervisors and managers, your Human Resource Consultants, and of course, the Employee Advisory Service. We always invite your questions or comments, which can be directed to your area office and we will be happy to respond. For 29 years, EAS has been the Employee Assistance Program for our state Employees and their families. This new venture is another way to reach out to you.

Alcohol Effects & Discrimination



Women become more intoxicated than men do after drinking the same amount of alcohol, even when differences in body weight are taken into account. Women's bodies have proportionately less water than men's bodies, and because alcohol mixes with body water, a given amount of alcohol becomes more highly concentrated in a woman's body than in a man's. That is why the recommended drinking limit for women is lower than that for men. Chronic alcohol abuse takes a heavier physical toll on women than on men, and alcohol dependence and related medical problems, such as brain and liver damage, progress more rapidly in women.

Source: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

Avoid Annual Evaluation "Surprises"



If your annual evaluation by a team leader, work group, or supervisor was an unpleasant shock last year, consider short meetings with your evaluator four times a year. Just a few minutes in a short meeting can help you stay focused on the work rather than experience anxiety over what's "going to happen" at the end of the evaluation period. Get feedback on key elements or essential functions of your work, and walk away from any meeting knowing exactly what expectations you must meet to achieve the performance rating you want. *Secondary benefit:* You will build more communication with your evaluator and will worry less about the relationship.

Kids & Summer Drug Use



Kids in trouble with drugs don't take a vacation from drug abuse with the coming of summer. With more contact, signs and symptoms may be easier to spot between parents and kids during summer months.

Although brief experimentation is typically hard to spot, addiction includes more disturbing behavioral symptoms. A family history of addiction increases the likelihood that experimentation with drugs or alcohol can lead to addiction.

Signs and Symptoms

- 1) **Mood swings** from passive and withdrawn to angry and hostile;
- 2) personality changes from energetic and outgoing to non-communicative;
- 3) blaming others and feeling "persecuted" or "victimized";
- 4) unwillingness or inability to discuss important issues or concerns (the "leave me alone" syndrome);
- 5) rejection of family (meals, gatherings, or celebrations);
- 6) spending time with suspicious friends who refuse to meet parents, look them in the eye, or talk to them, and changing to clothing or jewelry styles that support drug abuse culture;
- 7) isolation: spending unusually long periods of time alone in bedroom;
- 8) apathy: dropping once meaningful activities like clubs, hobbies, and sports.

EAS can provide you with more information and guidance on intervening with a child or teen you suspect is using drugs. *Common mistake:* Adults dismissing drug use as "normal" or a symptom of a depressed teenager rather than a possible primary healthcare problem.